

THE CORELLAS

GENUS: *Cacatua*

SUBGENUS: *Licmetis*

Continued from the March edition

#3 THE LITTLE CORELLA



Photo: Brett Donald

The Little Corella, *Cacatua sanguinea*, also known as the Short-billed Corella or Bare-eyed Cockatoo, is a white cockatoo endemic to Australia.

The Little Corella grows to 36 to 39cm in length and gathers in flocks of up to several thousand birds, often in company with Galahs, *Eolophus roseicapilla*. They roost in trees overnight, and when they fly off to feed in the early morning the noise they make is

almost deafening. They are a ground-feeding species, their diet is mainly seed including cereal crops like wheat and barley. It is so common that it has become something of a pest throughout much of Australia, and can be destructive to the trees in which it perches, by chewing the bark off smaller twigs. They are also very destructive to golf courses and ovals. This Corella can be commonly found in and around Adelaide and in many country towns.



LITTLE CORELLAS AT THE MOOMBA GAS FIELD SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Photo: Glenn Powell www.glenno.com

Both adults are similar in appearance, but males are larger and have a broader head. The body is white; lores and hidden feather bases of the head pink/orange; the bare eye-ring is dark grey/blue, and extends well below eyes, which are dark brown. Juveniles are similar to the adult but with a paler blue eye-ring and are tinged grey/pink beneath the eye.

The contact call is a repetitive and raspy squeak. A calling flock has been likened to the sound of distant geese.

In the breeding season they inhabit riverine woodlands adjacent to grasslands or agricultural areas. In the non breeding season they can be found in a variety of areas including Eucalyptus and Acacia scrublands, lightly treed or open grasslands, rice fields, sedge plains, Mulga, Mallee, Callitris/Eucalyptus woodland, semiarid and monsoon woodland and shrubland, Spinifex, Saltbush Atriplex, mangrove, crop areas, roadsides and suburban areas.



SPECIES RANGE
Map: "Kiwifruitboi"

Little Corellas are accomplished mimics with exceptional clarity of speech and are often kept as pets. However, unlike the Long-billed Corella, many become very savage on reaching sexual maturity. An excellent example of the temperament of a pet Little Corella was “Kenny” the sometime resident Corella at *Birds International* in Hectorville, South Australia. An accomplished talker he would walk around with a tin on his head chattering away, while watching what was happening through a small hole in the end. Customers could not resist tapping on the tin, at which Kenny would flip it off and grab the offending finger. This was despite several signs on his cage stating: *MY NAME IS KENNY. I CAN TALK THE LEG OFF A TABLE, BUT HAVE A NASTY NATURE.* Many a Bandaid was dispensed over the years!



The Little Corella is evaluated as “Least Concern” on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, as unlike many parrot species, both its numbers and range are increasing.

Reference:

Wikipedia
World Parrot Trust—Parrot
Encyclopedia - Species Profiles

Series to be continued.